27. (new) The antagonist of claim 26 wherein native IL-15 is conjugated with a chemical group that sterically interferes with the ability of IL-15 to transduce a signal through the IL-15 receptor complex.

28. (new) The antagonist of claim 27 wherein the native IL-15 has the sequence of amino acids 49-162 of SEQ ID:1 or 49-162 of SEQ ID:2.

29. (new) An antagonist of interleukin-15 (IL-15) activity comprising native IL-15 having the sequence of amino acids 49-162 of SEQ ID:2 conjugated with a chemical group that sterically interferes with the ability of IL-15 to transduce a signal through the IL-15 receptor complex.

30. (new) The antagonist of claim 26 wherein a mutein of IL-15 is conjugated with a chemical group that sterically interferes with the ability of IL-15 to transduce a signal through the IL-15 receptor complex.

31. (new) The antagonist of claim 30 wherein the mutein comprises at least one deletion or substitution with a different naturally-occurring amino acid residue at a position corresponding to amino acid residue Asp^{56} or Gln^{156} of SEQ ID NOs: 1 or 2.

32. (new) An antagonist of interleukin-15 (IL-15) activity comprising a mutein corresponding to amino acids 49-162 of SEQ ID:2, wherein either or both of Asp^{56} or Gln^{156} are substituted with serine or cysteine, conjugated with a chemical group that sterically interferes with the ability of IL-15 to transduce a signal through the IL-15 receptor complex.

33. (new) The antagonist of claim 32 wherein Asp^{56} is substituted with serine or cysteine.

34. (new) The antagonist of claim 32 wherein Gln^{156} is substituted with serine or cysteine.

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35. (new) The antagonist of claim 26 wherein the IL-15 or mutein of IL-15 is covalently bonded to a large inert moiety selected from the group consisting of PEG, mPEG, PVP, dextran, PVA, poly amino acids, albumin, and gelatin.

Sub D2

36. (new) The antagonist of claim 35 wherein the large inert moiety is selected from the group consisting of PEG, PVP, and dextran.

37. (new) The antagonist of claim 36 wherein the large inert moiety is PEG having a molecular weight between about 1000 and about 20,000.

38. (new) The antagonist of claim 28 wherein the IL-15 is covalently bonded to PEG having a molecular weight between about 1000 and about 20,000.

B1

39. (new) The antagonist of claim 31 wherein the mutein is covalently bonded to PEG having a molecular weight between about 1000 and about 20,000.

40. (new) The antagonist of claim 37 wherein the PEG has a molecular weight of about 5000.

41. (new) The antagonist of claim 37 wherein the PEG is selected from the group consisting of SS-PEG, SC-PEG, SPA-PEG, VS-PEG, and Mal-PEG.

42. (new) The antagonist of claim 41 wherein the PEG is SC-PEG.

43. (new) A composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and an antagonist according to claim 26.

44. (new) A composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and an antagonist according to claim 28.

45. (new) A composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and an antagonist according to claim 31.

46. (new) A composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent and an antagonist according to claim 37.

47. (new) A method for treating a patient having symptoms of organ transplant rejection, graft-versus-host disease, autoimmune disease, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, lymphoma, carcinoma, leukemia, rhabdosarcoma, a dermatologic disorder, insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, an ocular disorder, idiopathic nephrotic syndrome, or idiopathic membranous nephropathy comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 43.

B1

48. (new) The method of claim 47 wherein the patient has symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, lymphoma, carcinoma, leukemia, or a dermatologic disorder.

Sub C1

49. (new) A method for treating a patient having symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, lymphoma, carcinoma, leukemia, or a dermatologic disorder comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 44.

50. (new) A method for treating a patient having symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, lymphoma, carcinoma, leukemia, or a dermatologic disorder comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 45.

51. (new) A method for treating a patient having symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, lymphoma, carcinoma, leukemia, or a dermatologic disorder comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 46.

52. (new) A method for treating a patient having the symptoms of graft-versus-host disease or to prolong allograft survival comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 44.

53. (new) A method for treating a patient having the symptoms of graft-versus-host disease or to prolong allograft survival comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 45.

Sub C1

54. (new) A method for treating a patient having the symptoms of graft-versus-host disease or to prolong allograft survival comprising administering to the patient a pharmaceutical composition according to claim 46.

55. (new) A method for making the antagonist of claim 26 comprising conjugating IL-15 or a mutein of IL-15 with a chemical group that sterically interferes with the ability of IL-15 to transduce a signal through the IL-15 receptor complex.

Remarks

Claims 26-55 are pending. Applicants submit herewith authorization to charge additional fees for claims to Applicants' Deposit Account.

New claims 26-55 are supported throughout the specification and claims as originally filed. Claims 27-29 are supported, for example, at page 5, lines 9-14; claims 30-34 are supported, for example, at page 10, lines 24-37; claims 35-42 are supported, for example, at pages 11-12; claims 47-54 are supported, for example, at pages 3 and 14.

If a telephonic interview would be helpful in the prosecution of this application the Examiner is invited to telephone the attorney of record at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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